

Orals

12-12-06

Mayor Euille
Vice Mayor Macdonald
Alexandria City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314



Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council,

The Natural Exploreum was founded with the goal of creating unique, interactive learning experiences for children. The number of young children in the City is growing, as evidenced by the increase in the kindergarten population. However, Alexandria lacks play opportunities for these younger children. As a result, many Alexandria parents take their children to recreational facilities in Arlington and Fairfax.

In our discussions with parents as well as initial conversations with City Parks and Recreation staff, it has come to our attention that there may be an opportunity for us to work with the City to create an educational soft room play space in Alexandria. A soft room at the most basic level is a padded indoor playground. Fairfax County has a popular soft room at the Lee Recreation Center.

We, the Natural Exploreum, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, would like to partner with the City to create a unique soft room in Alexandria. In our concept, and in keeping with the Exploreum's mission, the Alexandria Soft room would include educational features that invite children to learn more about the natural environment of our community.

If the city is willing and able to commit the facility and operations, our organization will commit to raise the funds to design and equip the room. In our preliminary conversation with City staff, we believe there are spaces that could be used for a soft room. We also believe the City could benefit from some revenue and interest in birthday parties and other events held at the soft play room. Fairfax County presently charges for the use of its room.

We are writing to formally ask the City Council to direct City Staff to work with us to design and develop this opportunity. We also seek permission to begin fundraising to equip such a facility. We expect most contributions to come from individuals, but we would also like to consider corporate sponsorship as part of the fundraising. As an incentive for individual contributions to the initial installation effort, we would like to be able to offer the benefit of discounted birthday party space rental in the completed soft play room. And for substantial corporate sponsorships, we propose a wall banner or other form of visible recognition.

We believe a partnership between the City and the Natural Exploreum would be a win-win situation for our City's youngest residents. Other indoor play opportunities in the region, while they do exist, are often crowded, particularly on days of inclement weather. Additionally, Alexandria City residents do not have priority for rental at the county facilities. We have every reason to believe that a soft play room in the City of Alexandria would be a well-loved facility.

Thank you for your consideration of this opportunity. We look forward to working with you.

Devin Reese, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Devin Reese', is written over the printed name.

The Natural Exploreum, Inc.
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